

PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2015

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PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Aim

1. Oxford City Council (the Council) makes decisions on pay which are appropriate to local circumstances (such as cost of living in Oxford, the need to compete for talent in the market in challenging areas, etc.) and which deliver value for money for the community. In publishing this statement the Council wishes to give assurance and transparency in its pay decision making processes and overall policy.
2. The Council is committed to the procedures which determine the pay and conditions of employment in that they are fair, free from bias and do not discriminate unlawfully. This includes ensuring that the differences in pay between the lowest and the highest paid employees are not unduly disparate.
3. The Council also seeks to operate a pay system that is transparent and based on objective criteria.
4. The Chief Executive has delegated authority in respect of pay, in accordance with national or local pay award/review schemes other than the Chief Executive's own pay and that of any Directors. Decisions in respect of the pay of the Chief Executive and Directors are made by the Appointments Committee, which is a politically proportionate Committee of Council.

Scope

5. The Council's Pay Policy Statement covers all employees.

Definitions

6. This statement makes reference to the following:

'Lowest paid employees' – for the purposes of this Statement, these are defined as: those employees paid at the prevailing Oxford Living Wage rate (on the basis these are the Council's lowest paid staff) with the exception of those identified at paragraph 20 (below). From October 2013 no Oxford City Council employee is paid at a rate below grade 3, except those identified at paragraph 20 (below)

'Pay multiple' - the ratio between the highest paid employee and the median earnings calculated across the whole Council

'Remuneration' – includes salary, expenses, bonus, partnership payment and also severance payments

'Senior staff / most senior staff' – either directly employed or hired under a contract for services, which can mean self-employed or via an agency). Specifically these are:

- Chief Executive
- Directors
- Heads of Service

Legislation

7. The Council is required by the Localism Act 2011 to prepare, approve and publish a pay policy statement.

8. The Council must also have regard to the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency which makes a commitment to follow three principles when publishing data: responding to public demand; releasing data in open formats available for re-use; and, releasing data in a timely way. This includes data on senior salaries and the structure of the workforce.

Principles

Remuneration

9. The City Council currently remunerates all staff through the following elements:

- Salary – the Council has adopted an Oxford Living Wage where no employee or agency worker earns less than £8.69 per hour. This rate is set at 95% of the London Living Wage (£9.15 per hour)and tracks that rate from April 2015. The lowest Council employee rate (except for those employees identified in paragraph 20 (below) is £9.12 per hour.
- From April 2013 a new 5-year pay deal was agreed which introduced a 1.5% cost of living award each year, re-introduced increments (for those on the lowest spinal column point in each grade and subject to an assessment of performance and attendance) and continued the partnership payment.
- Partnership payment - payable to all staff who achieve an acceptable level of attendance and appraisal on the assumption the Council achieves its budget requirements. The Chief Executive and Directors have voluntarily withdrawn from the payment but are nonetheless committed to its provision.
- Various allowances payable where additional duties are undertaken and payment for which is not included through normal salary (e.g. standby, overtime). There are various rules regarding these payments such as earnings limits over which certain items cannot be claimed.
- A travel concession for all staff travelling to work by public transport and purchasing a season ticket – at a rate of 20% of the cost of the ticket or £150 per year, whichever is lower.

10. All staff are eligible to join the Local Government Pension Scheme. They are automatically enrolled and are required to specifically opt out should they so wish unless their contract is for less than three months when they must opt to join.

11. There are a range of benefits such as flexible working, leisure concessions, childcare vouchers and various discounts on high street goods and services. Some are available through approved salary sacrifice schemes. The Council does not provide any benefits in kind to any staff member. Where required, equipment may be provided in order to assist in the performance of duties, such as a laptop, but any such items are to be returned to the Council on cessation of employment.

Variations in remuneration

12. Apart from the differences identified in paragraphs 13 & 14, there are no other distinctions made in terms of remuneration. Severance payments are made in accordance with the Council's Organisational Change Policy which applies to all staff.

Current Pay Schemes

13. Three pay schemes are operated (in agreement with trade unions) as follows:

- 1) National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government Services. Grades 3 – 11 using NJC SCP points. This covers the majority of staff (Scheme 1)
- 2) Joint National Council (JNC) for Craft & Associated Employees. Grades. This covers approximately 150 employees (Scheme 2)
- 3) Hay grades for certain senior positions as indicated in the biennial executive pay review (Scheme 3)

Current Pay Schemes – more detail

14. Staff are appointed at the bottom of the grade unless there are exceptional circumstances which must be agreed by the Head of Human Resources & Facilities Management. The schemes in more detail are as follows:

Scheme 1 – the principal scheme which is appropriate for the majority of staff and introduced as a result of Single Status and by agreement with trade unions. It consists of 9 grades and was based on the national spinal column points at the point the Council entered a local pay agreement. It is based on an analytical job evaluation scheme with a pay line set at broadly median market rate. Those employees on the bottom of each grade are eligible for biennial progression based on an assessment of performance and attendance up to the mid point of the grade. In sales related jobs, there is a documented bonus scheme in place payable as a result of new business opportunities realised.

Scheme 2 – the Council has an agreement with trade unions whereby it adopts the national scheme for skilled craft workers with a productivity element determining progression. The scheme recognises the nature of progression through apprenticeships and then once skilled, the reasonably high yet static level of competence needing to be maintained to perform safely and effectively.

Scheme 3 – like many other public sector organisations, the Council uses the Hay job evaluation scheme and industry leading independent consultants to recommend pay for the Chief Executive, Directors, Heads of Service, and a small number of key corporate roles and service managers who have very wide remits and responsibilities. Whilst the NJC job evaluation scheme represents good practice in determining relativities between posts for the majority of staff, the scheme does not include the appropriate breadth to include the responsibility factors of senior posts such as corporate leadership, reputation management, major service and programme delivery, etc. Senior officer pay is reviewed every 2 years by independent external review and the recommendations considered by the Chief Executive or Appointments Committee as appropriate. In 2014 the Hay grades were brought in line with the regular pay scheme whereby defined increments were established in grades with progression on the same basis as all other staff.

There are separate grades for senior officers as follows:

- Chief Executive
- Executive Directors
- Heads of Service (2 different grades according to level of responsibilities and market factors)
- Business Lead (in corporate leadership roles or areas of major staff and budget responsibilities)
- Service Manager + (in Housing to reflect increased responsibilities over grade 11 but less than Business Lead)

Progression is based on an assessment of competency and performance. The manager in each case determines progression within grades apart from the Chief Executive and Directors which is as set out in paragraph 4.

For all 3 schemes (except for Directors and the Chief Executive) an annual Partnership Payment is payable to eligible staff (i.e. those not receiving an increment) subject to the Council achieving its budget and an acceptable level of individual performance and attendance.

Returning Officer

15. The Council's Returning Officer (for the purposes of elections) is paid a separate fee in addition to normal salary in accordance with the prescribed fee for each election.

Leavers, Re-engagement, Pensions

16. In accordance with the Council's normal arrangements regarding termination and severance payments, no employee leaving under a settlement agreement with a redundancy payment can be re-employed by the Council within a period of 36 months.

17. The same arrangements apply to ex-employees seeking engagement through an agency or under a contract for services.

18. In accordance with the Council's Policy on Pension Discretions the Council does not augment pensions for leavers.

Lowest Paid Employees

19. The Council adopted an Oxford Living Wage in 2009. In April 2015 the London Living Wage is £9.15, the National Living Wage is £7.85, the Oxford Living Wage is £8.69. No Council employee* will be paid less than this, apart from the Council's apprentices who commence their apprenticeship below the Oxford Living Wage but rapidly progress to rates in excess of it. The 2013 – 2018 pay deal gives further attention to the lowest paid by increasing the lowest spinal column point to £9.12 per hour from April 2015 (for Council staff only).

** No agency worker will be paid less than the prevailing Oxford Living Wage (the hourly rate calculation can include payment in lieu of holiday pay)*

Pay Multiple

20. The Oxford City Council pay multiple is 1:8 which is considered to be appropriate in the context of achieving a reasonable balance between increasing the standard of living for the lowest paid employees (and their having to meet the expense of living in Oxford), and ensuring we attract and retain the skills and experience required at the most senior level to meet the challenges the City faces.

Equal Pay

21. The Council will periodically undertake an equal pay review in agreement with trade unions.

22. The gender pay gap at the Council (as per the Equality & Human Rights Commission methodology) is as follows:

Full time gender pay gap = -2.69% (so on average women get paid more than men)

Part time gender pay gap (i.e. part time women compared with full time men which is the Commission methodology) = 5.78% (so on average part time women's hourly rate is less than full time men's hourly rate)

Communication & Data Publication

23. The Council will publish its Annual Pay Policy Statement on its website as soon as possible in each financial year following the first meeting of Council for the current financial year.

24. Any changes to the Pay Policy Statement may be made by resolution of the Council (including during the financial year to which it relates). Any changes will be publicised on the Council's website as soon as possible after revision.

25. The Council will also publish data annually relating to senior officer remuneration as outlined in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency.

Monitoring/Review

26. The Chief Executive, as the Head of Paid Service, has overall responsibility for employees and therefore annual publication of the Pay Policy Statement and pay data produced in relation to it.